Guide to the Eric Dibner Papers

Collection number: BANC MSS 99/186 c

The Bancroft Library

University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, California

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Collection Summary

Collection Title: Eric Dibner Papers,
Date (inclusive): 1973-1991
Date (bulk): 1975-1985
Collection Number: BANC MSS 99/186 c
Creator: Dibner, Eric
Extent: Number of containers: 4 cartonsLinear feet: 5
Repository: The Bancroft Library.
Berkeley, California 94720-6000

Abstract: The Eric Dibner Papers, 1973-1991 (bulk 1975-1985), document Dibner's work as an accessibility expert for persons with disabilities. Dibner was very active in the disability rights movement, and consulted for variety of institutions and organizations, including the University of California, Berkeley, the Center for Independent Living (CIL), and the California Association of the Physically Handicapped (CAPH). The collection, which includes notes, correspondence, meeting agendas, files, legal briefs, photographs, architectural plans, reports, and publications, also shows the development of architectural accessibility through the momentum of the disability rights movement.

Languages Represented: Collection materials are in English.

Physical Location: For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's online catalog.
Restrictions
Collection is open for research.

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[Identification of item], Eric Dibner Papers, BANC MSS 99/186 c, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Related Collections
BANC MSS 2001/49 c, v. 3. Phonotape 3109 C: 1-29
Additional related collections may be found by searching the corporate author/name "Disability Rights and Independent Living Movement collection" in U.C. Berkeley's online catalog.

Separated Material
Printed materials have been transferred to the book collection of The Bancroft Library.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.
Center for Independent Living.
University of California, Berkeley.
San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (Calif.)
California Association of the Physically Handicapped.
Gray Panthers.
Barrier-free design--California--Berkeley.
Discrimination against people with disabilities--Law and legislation.
People with disabilities--California.
Dwellings--Access.
Barrier-free design.
Barrier-free design for students with disabilities.
Berkeley (Calif.)
People's Park (Berkeley, Calif.)
Photographs.
Disability Rights and Independent Living Movement collection.

Acquisition Information
The Eric Dibner Papers were given to The Bancroft Library by Eric Dibner in 1998.

Processing Information
Processed by Amber Smock; completed by Elizabeth Konzak.

Biography
Eric Dibner, born in 1947, enrolled in an architecture curriculum at University of California, Berkeley in 1965. After working at a construction company and an architect's office during the following summer, Dibner found that he did not enjoy drafting, preferring to think and theorize about design. While attending classes in the Fall of 1967, Dibner also began working part-time as an attendant for Scott Sorensen and John Hessler, disabled students in the Cowell Hospital Disabled Residence Program. In 1968, frustrated by his schoolwork and enthralled by the activity in Berkeley, Dibner dropped out of school and accompanied John Hessler to France to work as a live-in attendant while Hessler studied abroad.
In the fall of 1969, following his return to California, Dibner became a live-in attendant for Scott Sorensen in Berkeley. After Sorensen died a year later, Dibner worked for the University's Physically Disabled Students Program (PDSP) as a housing
coordinator, also filling in for various other duties when needed. Because of his interest in architecture, Dibner became involved with the Coordinating Committee for the Removal of Architectural Barriers (CCRAB), working within the university to promote accessibility for the disabled. Dibner ascribed to the thought that people with disabilities know best what sort of accommodations work, and helped to test new accessibility measures with people from PDSP.

In 1972, Dibner began working for the Center for Independent Living (CIL), a Berkeley community organization for disabled self-help. He worked on a variety of access and housing issues for CIL including accessibility surveys of buildings and sidewalks. In 1974, Dibner worked as a live-in attendant for Hale Zukas, a leading advocate for barrier removal. Zukas became a mentor to Dibner on access issues, policy processes, and design development.

In 1975 Dibner conducted an accessibility survey of BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit), and also worked on campaigns and lawsuits to remove grocery store cart barriers that made stores inaccessible. Besides working on these and other public building accessibility initiatives, Dibner also coordinated CIL's move from their University Avenue offices to a new building on Telegraph Avenue. In 1978 and 1979 Dibner worked with the Disabled Law Resource Center of CIL to provide Section 504 compliance training as well as continuing education classes on accessibility. Through his work experience Dibner became known as an accessibility specialist, frequently working as a consultant and speaking at conferences.

By the early 1980's CIL had many important projects but very little funding, causing the staff to be overwhelmed and underpaid. After CIL administration tried to prevent a union from forming, the staff, including Dibner, went on strike. Disillusioned, Dibner resigned from CIL in 1982. He then worked for Access California, a municipal organization in Oakland, California, and spent much of his time surveying Oakland's street corners for accessibility. Dibner was also very involved with the California Association of the Physically Handicapped (CAPH), serving on various housing and executive committees, and as East Bay chapter vice president and later, president, from 1983-1984.

In 1985, Dibner returned to Maine to be closer to his family. From 1986 to 1991, he worked as an accessibility specialist for a number of groups, including the independent-living organization Alpha One and the Maine Association for Handicapped Persons (MAHP). He also consulted for the Transit Authority of South Portland in order to help tackle accessibility issues on public buses. In 1991, Dibner moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico, and took a consulting job that focused on technology-related assistance, as part of a project undertaken by the Department of Rehabilitation. Later, he worked on access issues and building codes with the Governor's Committee on Advocating for Disabled Access. Dibner returned to California in the mid-1990's, and worked for the City of Berkeley as the Disability Compliance Coordinator from 1996-2001.

**Scope and Content of Collection**

The Eric Dibner Papers, 1973-1991 (bulk 1975-1985), document Dibner's work as an accessibility expert for people with disabilities. Dibner was very active in the disability rights movement, and consulted for variety of institutions and organizations, including the University of California, Berkeley, the Center for Independent Living (CIL), and the California Association of the Physically Handicapped (CAPH). The collection, which includes notes, correspondence, meeting agendas, files, legal briefs, photographs, architectural plans, reports, and publications, shows the development of architectural accessibility through the momentum of the disability rights movement.

The bulk of the material is from Dibner's work with CIL and various other housing and accessibility organizations, including committees organized by the City of Berkeley, in the late 1970's and early 1980's. Although Dibner worked as an attendant for UC Berkeley students John Hessler, Scott Sorensen, and Hale Zukas, and was very active in the university's Physically Disabled Students Program (PDSP), there is no documentation of these activities in the collection. There are also very few records dated after Dibner's move to Maine in 1985.

The collection contains materials on a number of notable projects and events, including the surveying of public buildings and streets in Berkeley, Oakland, and San Francisco, and materials documenting an accessibility survey resulting in an access lawsuit against BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit). Also included are materials regarding campaigns and lawsuits for the removal of grocery store cart barriers, as well as documentation of protests against San Francisco Regency Theaters' ironically inaccessible screenings of Coming Home, a film about a disabled veteran.

Other San Francisco Bay Area related materials in the collection include files regarding Berkeley public space planning for areas such as the California School for the Deaf and Blind, the waterfront, and People's Park, as well as files concerning Berkeley housing and rent control.

Records from CIL, predominantly from the years 1975-1982, contain condensed reports on the internal workings of CIL, and include information on accessibility measures, as well as administrative, organizational, and committee files. The materials also include documentation and photographs of the CIL worker's strike in 1981-1982, and information on the Disability Support Service Workers Union.

Of particular interest to researchers may be CIL records, community group files, and materials regarding Berkeley-area public space planning, as well as the broad coverage of a number of disability rights and accessibility organizations.

Carton 1, Carton 2 folders 1-21, Oversize folder 1B

Scope and Content Note
Arrangement

Arranged hierarchically and chronologically.

This series chronicles Eric Dibner’s work on architectural and transportation barriers through notes, flyers, meeting minutes, correspondence, architectural sketches and blueprints, publications, and photographs. The materials cover a broad range of activism from general information to specific cases.

The series is divided into geographical sub-series: General, National, State of California, and San Francisco Bay Area. General includes Dibner’s accessibility presentations, as well as general accessibility clippings. National contains records on organizations such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board. State of California consists of information on building standards, the Office of the State Architect, and the California Association of the Physically Handicapped (CAPH).

San Francisco Bay Area information is further divided into Bay Area subjects and cities. BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) includes an accessibility lawsuit. Berkeley materials include work with Grey Panthers housing committees, the Berkeley Housing Coalition, and the California School for the Blind and Deaf. University of California, Berkeley, materials on campus access, the Coordinating Committee on the Removal of Architectural Barriers, and accessible housing. Oakland records include complaints of accessibility in Oakland restaurants, and files concerning the Oakland Housing Authority. San Francisco records contain information on the protests against inaccessible screenings of Coming Home, a film about a disabled veteran, at the Regency Theaters, and a public buildings accessibility survey.


- Presentations and Programs 1978-1991, undated
- Disability Awareness flyers and clippings 1981, 1988-1989


- HUD Field Office jurisdictions 1979
- Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (ATBCB) 1980-1986
- National Center for a Barrier Free Environment 1980-1984

Subseries 1.3: State of California, 1979-1985, undated

- California Association of the Physically Handicapped (CAPH) meeting materials 1982-1985
- Building Standards Commission 1979-1985
- Title 24 Revision of the Uniform Building Code 1983-1985
- Coalition for Strong Access Regulations 1983-1985
- California Access organizations brochures undated

Subseries 1.4: San Francisco Bay Area, 1973-1985, undated

- BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit), 1983-1985, undated
  - Ridership survey questionnaires undated
  - Architectural modification drawing 1984

- Market Barriers, 1976-1985, undated
  - General 1976-1985
  - Consumers Cooperative of Berkeley: Market Gates 1977
  - "Corral Those Carts!" [Lucky Store's Poster] undated
  - Safeway Store's Gate drawing undated

- Berkeley, 1973-1985
  - Herrick Hospital expansion 1973-1975
  - Gray Panthers Nursing Home Committee 1977-1979
  - Gray Panthers Housing Committee 1978-1983
  - Berkeley Housing Coalition 1979-1980
  - California School for Deaf and Blind site 1979-1985
  - California School for the Blind, Fremont 1981
Subseries 1.4: San Francisco Bay Area, 1973-1985, undated

carton Carton 2, folder 8
California School for Deaf/Blind site: Dwight/Derby section 8 housing study
1984
University Avenue housing cooperative 1981

University of California, Berkeley, 1975-1985
Architecture 202-135 course material 1975

Physically Disabled Students Residence - Program brochures circa 1975-1980

Coordinating Committee for the Removal of Architectural Barriers (CCRAB)
1977-1985
Campus Access by Keith Wilson 1979

University Student Co-op Association: Rochdale II 1979-1980

Oakland, 1975-1983
Accessibility complaints

Keith Kellum correspondence 1976-1983

Oakland Housing Authority (OHA) 1978-1979

San Francisco, 1978-1982
Regency Theaters Protest 1978

Public buildings access 1978-1982

Ghirardelli Square Tour Guide Map marked with access barriers 1982

Series 2: Center for Independent Living (CIL), 1973-1982, undated
Scope and Content Note
Arrangement
Arranged hierarchically and chronologically.
This series is divided into two sub-series: Administrative Records, and Reports and Publications. Administrative Records consist of general files, committee notes, grant funding information, and staff meeting minutes. The records also include papers and photographs that chronicle the CIL workers’ strike in 1981-1982. Reports and Publications contain brochures and reports on the demand for rehabilitation services, as well as the 1975 State of the Art Conference. They also include a list of publications from 1980.


carton Carton 2, folder 22
Housing 1973-1974

carton Carton 2, folder 23-24
General 1975-1977

carton Carton 3, folder 1-7
General 1978-1982, undated

carton Carton 3, folder 8
Staff meetings 1975-1976

carton Carton 3, folder 9-10
Organization files 1975-1982

carton Carton 3, folder 11-13
Community Development block grant 1976-1980
Series 2: Center for Independent Living (CIL), 1973-1982, undated

- Coordinating Committee 1976-1977
- Workers’ Council 1979-1980
- Strike 1980-1982
- Disability Support Service Workers Union 1981-1982

Subseries 2.2: Reports and Publications, 1973-1980, undated

- Brochures circa 1975-1985
- Estimating Demand for a Rehabilitation Services Facility 1973
- CIL Project Reports 1978, undated
- CIL List of Publications 1979-1980

Series 3: City of Berkeley, 1976-1986, undated

Scope and Content Note
Arrangement
Arranged chronologically.

This series contains correspondence, notes, photographs, and printed materials about the City of Berkeley, including access violations, accessibility lawsuit materials, records from the Mayor's Task Force on the Disabled, architectural records denoting access renovations, and records of community committees. It also contains planning materials for People's Park and the Berkeley waterfront.

- Public works and codes inspection 1976-1981
- City of Berkeley disability awareness 1978-1981
- Violations 1979-1985
- Waterfront planning 1977-1985
- People's Park 1979-1986
- Surveys of Berkeley public buildings 1980
- Post office 1980-1984
- Post office architectural drawing drafts 1977
- Berkeley YMCA: Advisory Health Committee 1982-1983
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<tr>
<th>Carton/Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Carton 4, folder 19</td>
<td>Coalition to Stop Electroshock Treatment 1982-1984</td>
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<td>Carton 4, folder 20</td>
<td>Committee for the Removal of Architectural Barriers (CRAB) 1984-1985</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carton 4, folder 21</td>
<td>Disability Awareness training course 1984</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oversize 1B</td>
<td>Architectural modifications plan of the Church of the Divinity School of the Pacific undated</td>
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